customs duty and higher cost of indigenous materials push up the cost of production. Even then, however, photovoltaic cells are already economical compared to conventional power for several applications in areas at a distance from the transmission network. The Department of Non-Conventional Energy Sources is supporting efforts aimed at bringing down the costs, such as improvement in technology, increase in market size, improving systems design, etc. Special emphasis is also being placed on the development of newer technologies. A major technology development project relating to amorphous silicon solar cells is being implemented in the Seventh Plan which includes the establishment of a Pilot Plant.

Village level energy programme

3328. SHRI SURENDRA SINGH THAKUR: Will the Minister of ENERGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have launched village level energy programme in the Seventh Plan;

(b) if so, what are the details thereof;

(c) what are the achievements of Government during Sixth and Seventh Plan period under this programme;

(d) how many villages have so far been covered State-wise under this programme in the country; and

(e) whether Government would consider to speed up the programme in view of the energy needs of the villages?

THE MINISTER OF ENERGY (SHRI VASANT SATHE): (a) and (b) The Department of Non-Conventional Energy Sources has initiated a demonstration village level energy programme called "Urjagram Programme" in the Seventh plan. Under this programme urjagram projects which are based on a combination of various-non conventional energy devices and systems are taken up in suitable villages identified through energy surveys.

(c) and (d) 67 urjagram projects have so far been completed in 10 States/Union Territories, as follows:

1.	Andhra Pradesh . .	3
2.	Bihar	1
3.	Gujarat	9
4.	Madhya Pradesh . .	6
5.	Maharashtra . . .	10
6.	Orissa	6
7.	Tamil Nadu . . .	2
8.	Tripura . . .	2
9.	Uttar Pradesh . .	22
10.	Delhi	6

151 projects are under implementation, and several more are planned.

(e) Initially it is proposed to establish one such demonstration urjagram project in each Parliamentary constituency. Further expansion and acceleration of the programme will depend upon the availability of adequate financial resources.

Progress in the execution of hydel projects

3329. SHRI JAGADISH JANI: Will the Minister of ENERGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the execution of some hydel projects like Indravati and upper Kolab are behind schedule;

(b) if so, the reasons for the delay; and

(c) what are the details of progress made in the completion of those projects?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF POWER IN THE MINISTRY OF ENERGY (SHRI KALPNATH RAI): (a) Yes, Sir, the execution of some hydroelectric projects like Upper Indravati and Upper Kolab are behind schedule.